

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 131326Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0729

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: HERBERT WEHNER RE-ELECTED AS FRAKTION LEADER
FOR THE 6TH TIME

BEGIN SUMMARY: HERBERT WEHNER WAS RE-ELECTED SPD FRAKTION LEADER WITH MORE VOTES THAN THE LAST ELECTION IN 1973. TRADE UNIONIST ADOLF SCHMIDT WAS ELECTED TO REPLACE SCHELLENBERG AS ONE OF THE FIVE DEPUTY FRAKTION LEADERS AND THERE WERE THREE NEW DEPUTIES ELECTED TO THE 18-MEMBER DIRECTORATE. (THE FRAKTION WHIPS ARE ELECTED FOR THE WHOLE LEGISLATIVE PERIOD AND THEREFORE WERE NOT UP FOR RE-ELECTION.) THE GENERAL POLITICAL COMPLEXION OF THE FRAKTION LEADERSHIP REMAINS UNCHANGED. ALTHOUGH WEHNER IS MORE DISLIKED IN THE FRAKTION THAN EVER, HE HAS NO SIGNIFICANT RIVAL FOR THE POSITION AND IT IS UNCLEAR WHO HIS SUCCESSOR WILL BE WHEN HE CHOOSES TO STEP DOWN. END SUMMARY

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1. HERBERT WEHNER WAS RE-ELECTED SPD /RAKTION LEADER

ON JUNE 11. WEHNER RECEIVED 186 VOTES COMPARED WITH 172 IN DECEMBER 1973. TWENTY-FOUR BUNDESTAG DEPUTIES VOTED AGAINST HIM, TEN ABSTAINED AND ONE VOTE WAS INVALID. FOUR DEPUTY FRAKTION LEADERS WERE RE-ELECTED AND TRADE UNIONIST ADOLF SCHMIDT WAS ELECTED TO REPLACE SCHELLENBERG. THREE NEW MEMBERS OF THE 18-MEMBER DIRECTORATE WERE ELECTED FOR THE FIRST TIME, INCLUDING FORMER WHIP MANFRED SCHULTE. THE THREE "LEFTIST" CANDIDATES FOR THE DIRECTORATE WERE NOT ELECTED.

2. ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN SOME SPECULATION THAT WEHNER MIGHT NOT RUN FOR RE-ELECTION OR THAT HE MIGHT FACE SERIOUS OPPOSITION IF HE DID SO, NEITHER PROVED TO BE THE CASE. THE SPD TRIUMVIRATE, CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, SPD PARTY CHAIRMAN BRANDT, AND FRAKTION LEADER WEHNER, IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE THROUGH THE 1976 ELECTION. (BRANDT IS EXPECTED TO BE RE-ELECTED PARTY CHAIRMAN AT THE SPD NATIONAL CONVENTION IN NOVEMBER OF THIS YEAR.)

3. ALWAYS A "LONER," WEHNER HAS BECOME EVEN MORE ISOLATED IN THE FKTION SINCE THE DEMISE OF HIS PROTEGE KARL WIENAND. HIS NICKNAME "ONKEL HERBERT" IS MORE A TERM OF RESPECT AND FEAR THAN OF AFFECTION. WHILE WEHNER HAS CONSIDERABLY MORE ENEMIES THAN FRIENDS, HE REMAINS A POLITICIAN OF GREAT POWER AND INFLUENCE. THE MORALE IN THE FRAKTION UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP HAS CONTINUED TO DETERIORATE BUT NO ONE WISHES TO CHANCE POLITICAL SUICIDE BY DOING BATTLE WITH THE PIPE SMOKING, SARCASTIC WEHNER. THERE IS NO LOVE LOST BETWEEN WEHNER AND BRANDT OR WITH SCHMIDT FOR THAT MATTER, BUT ALL THREE ARE AWARE OF THE NEED FOR A SHOW OF SPD SOLIDARITY AT LEAST THROUGH THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR. VARIOUS NAMES ARE MENTIONED AS POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR TO WEHNER (E.G., DEPUTY FLOOR LEADER EHRENBURG, BRANDT'S PROTEGE EHMKE, FINANCE MINISTER APEL), BUT AT THE PRESENT TIME THERE SIMPLY IS NO CLEAR SUCCESSOR ON THE HORIZON. ONE ADDITIONAL POSSIBILITY FOR REPLACING WEHNER IS THAT SHOULD THE SPD LOSE NEXT YEAR'S ELECTION, SCHMIDT MIGHT RETURN TO HIS OLD JOB AS FRAKTION LEADER. HILLENBRAND

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